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ABSTRACT

Written for children ages six to nine, this book contains short stories and poems about play and safety by four boys and girls of ages seven to fourteen. Illustrations accompany the children's work. The book is intended to be read together by adult and child. Ten safety notes are included and space is provided for the child to write his/her definition of safety. Finally, there is a section to assist adults in instructing children about safe use of playground equipment: swings, slides, climbing apparatus, and seesaws. (For safety books for ages three through five and ages ten through twelve, see CE 020 051 and 020 053.) (CSS)

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CE

MEDIUM BIG KIDS

FOR AGES 6-9

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PREFACE

This book was written by children, for children.

Except for minor editorial changes, the stories and poems remain essentially as the children wrote them. Noelle, age 7; Judy, age 9; Dale, age 12; and Stirling, age 14, were the writers.

The book is a "read-together" book for adult and child, and includes a special "Adult's Corner" at the back.

Learning and personal growth often take place when opportunity is provided for peer identification of problems and problem solutions. The presentation of children's own personal experiences, feelings, and concerns often has a better chance of influencing other children's behavior than adult rules and regulations.

This book is an outgrowth of that concept.

Four children were given materials from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The materials presented the potential hazards of playground equipment and the kinds of injuries children have received. The children were asked to read the materials, and they discussed them with each other and an adult. The mission of the Consumer Product Safety Commission was discussed with the children. Their concept of play and their experiences on the playground were also discussed.

With vivid imagination, they created the characters of Say-hey, a talking frog, some of Say-hey's animal friends, and other characters. The artist read their stories and based his drawings on the descriptions of the characters as the children imagined them.

These stories and poems express the children's desire to take risks and have fun, to identify their risk-taking behavior, and then reluctantly to consider the desired change in behavior. They clearly demonstrate that children, when given adequate information and the opportunity to consider their own playground experiences with each other, can learn about playground equipment dangers and ways of correcting their unsafe play habits.

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INTRODUCTION

I SING A SIMPLE SONG OF SAFETY,
A CHEERFUL SONG OF A HAPPY CHILD PLAYING.

I LOVE TO PLAY ON A SUMMER DAY
(OH, FALL, SPRING, AND WINTER, TOO)
WITH THE BIRDS KEEPING TIME TO
MY BODY'S OWN RHYME
AND MY FRIENDS LAUGHING, RUNNING TOO.

BUT WHEN ONE OF US IS HURT,
FALLS, SCRAPES AN ARM OR HEAD IN THE DIRT,
OH, IT TAKES AWAY SOME MIRTH
TO SEE TEARS AND HEAR SIGHS
AND WE GATHER TO KISS THE SPOT
AND EASE THE PAIN.....

THEN I WISH ALL CHILDREN
COULD ALWAYS BE SAFE FROM HARM.

I WISH FOR SAFE PLAY, NO MORE TEARS
AND SIGHS, AND KISSES NOT FOR PAIN
BUT ALL FOR JOY.

PLAY SAFE AND FAIR

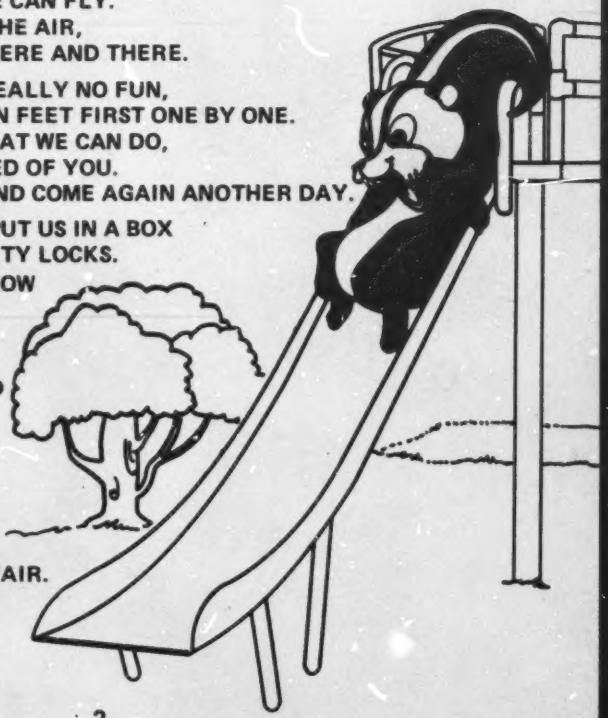
I KNOW THAT I AM NOT IN THE ZOO,
I SEE ANIMALS AND SO DO YOU.
THEY ARE ON THE SWINGS AND ON
THE SLIDE,
AND OH LOOK AT THEM GLIDE.

OH, LOOK HOW THEY SWING HIGH AND TALL,
WHAT IF ONE OF THEM SHOULD FALL ?
OH, WHAT'S THAT, WHO ARE YOU?
OR AM I GOING CUCKOO?
MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN BED TODAY
WHAT, YOU SAY YOUR NAME IS .....SAY-HEY?
OH, YOU CAN TELL US HOW TO SAFELY PLAY,
BUT DOESN'T THAT MEAN YOU'LL PUT US IN A BOX
AND TIE US UP WITH SAFETY LOCKS?

WE WANT TO SWING WAY, WAY UP HIGH,
SO WAY UP HIGH THAT WE CAN FLY.
AND WHEN WE GO UP IN THE AIR,
WE FEEL WE'RE FLYING HERE AND THERE.

AND ON THE SLIDE IT'S REALLY NO FUN,
IF YOU HAVE TO GO DOWN FEET FIRST ONE BY ONE.
WITH ALL THE THINGS THAT WE CAN DO,
WE REALLY HAVE NO NEED OF YOU.
SO SAY-HEY, GO AWAY, AND COME AGAIN ANOTHER DAY.

YOU SAY YOU WILL NOT PUT US IN A BOX
AND TIE US UP WITH SAFETY LOCKS.
BUT YOU WILL SHOW US HOW
TO SAFELY PLAY,
SO WE CAN HAVE FUN
AND A JOYFUL DAY,
WITHOUT ANY FALLS AND
BUMPS ON OUR HEADS,
AND WE CAN GO HOME
SAFELY TO OUR BEDS.
WELL, YOU WERE
RIGHT, SAY-HEY .....
IT IS MORE FUN WHEN
WE ALL PLAY SAFE AND FAIR.



THE STORY OF THE BEAUTIFUL QUEEN AND THE SIX SAFETIES

THERE ONCE WAS A VERY BEAUTIFUL QUEEN . BUT SHE HAD SO MANY PROBLEMS. YOU SEE, ONE OF HER PROBLEMS WAS THAT ALL THE CHILDREN WEREN'T PLAYING SAFELY ON THE PLAYGROUND. WHAT WAS SHE TO DO?

SHE KEPT ON TELLING THEM AND TELLING THEM AND TELLING THEM TO PLAY SAFELY. SHE ASKED AND PLEADED WITH THEM AGAIN AND AGAIN TO PLAY SAFELY ON THE PLAYGROUND.

BUT THEY WOULD NOT LISTEN... THEY JUST WOULD NOT LISTEN.

THE BEAUTIFUL QUEEN THEN SENT OUT HER GUARDS. SHE TOLD THEM TO TALK TO ALL THE PEOPLE TO SEE IF THEY COULD COME UP WITH THE THE ANSWER TO HER PROBLEM.

THE GUARDS CAME TO A SMALL HOUSE... AND IN THIS SMALL HOUSE LIVED THE SIX LITTLE SAFETIES:

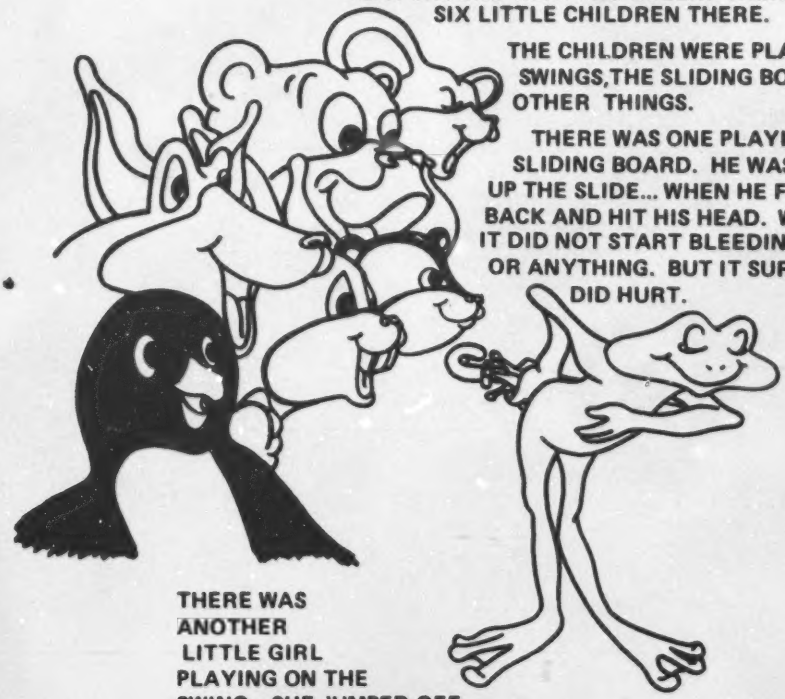
FOX,MOUSE,SKUNK,BEAR,RABBIT, AND PENGUIN. THE GUARDS KNOCKED AT THE DOOR AND FOX CAME OUT AND SAID "HI."

THE GUARD SAID, "CAN YOU HELP US?"

THE GUARDS EXPLAINED EVERYTHING TO EACH OF THE SIX SAFETIES. THEN THE SAFETIES WENT UP TO THE QUEEN.

THE QUEEN SAID TO THE SIX SAFETIES, "CAN YOU HELP ME? I WANT TO HAVE ALL THE CHILDREN SAFE. THEY ARE NOT SAFE NOW... THEY HURT THEMSELVES WHEN THEY GO TO THE PLAYGROUND."

SO THE SIX SAFETIES WENT OUTSIDE ONTO THE PLAYGROUND WITH THE QUEEN. THERE WERE SIX LITTLE CHILDREN THERE.



THE CHILDREN WERE PLAYING ON SWINGS, THE SLIDING BOARDS AND OTHER THINGS.

THERE WAS ONE PLAYING ON THE SLIDING BOARD. HE WAS CLIMBING UP THE SLIDE... WHEN HE FELL BACK AND HIT HIS HEAD. WELL, IT DID NOT START BLEEDING OR ANYTHING. BUT IT SURE DID HURT.

THERE WAS ANOTHER LITTLE GIRL PLAYING ON THE SWING. SHE JUMPED OFF AND HIT HER KNEE. IT STARTED TO BLEED.

THEN THERE WAS ANOTHER LITTLE BOY... HE WAS HURT WHEN HE GOT HIT BY THE SWING. YOU SEE, HE STOOD STRAIGHT IN FRONT OF THE SWING, AND SOMEONE HIT HIM REALLY HARD WITH HIS SHOES. HE FELL STRAIGHT DOWN AND HURT HIMSELF REAL BAD.

THEN THERE WAS THIS OTHER LITTLE GIRL WHO WAS SLIDING DOWN THE SLIDING BOARD. HER FRIEND WAS WAITING BEHIND HER TO TAKE A TURN. HE PUSHED HER DOWN BEFORE SHE WAS READY, AND SHE BUMPED RIGHT INTO HER FRIEND AND HURT HER. THE QUEEN,THE GUARDS , AND THE SIX SAFETIES STOOD AND WATCHED ALL THESE ACCIDENTS HAPPENING.

THE SIX SAFETIES DECIDED TO FIND OUT WHY THE CHILDREN WERE PLAYING SO UNSAFELY.

SO THEY WENT OVER TO ONE OF THE LITTLE CHILDREN WHOSE NAME WAS DINA. THEY ASKED DINA, "DINA, WHY ARE YOU CLIMBING UP THAT SLIDING BOARD?" AND THE SIX SAFETIES SAID, "IS IT SAFE TO DO THAT?" DINA SAID, "NO IT ISN'T. WHO CARES? I WON'T GET HURT."

SO THE SIX SAFETIES LET DINA GO UP. SHE ENDED UP HURTING HER BACK REALLY BAD. THEN THE SIX SAFETIES ASKED THE OTHER CHILDREN IF THEY SAW WHAT HAPPENED TO DINA. THEY SAID "YES, BUT THAT WON'T HAPPEN TO ME ." AND THE SIX SAFETIES SAID, "THAT'S JUST WHAT DINA SAID, AND LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO HER". BUT THE OTHER CHILDREN CONTINUED TO PLAY UNSAFELY.

SO,THE SIX SAFETIES DECIDED TO GO AND SEE THE QUEEN AGAIN .

THEY TOLD HER WHAT HAPPENED AND SAID THEY HAD A PLAN. THEY WOULD GO AND TALK WITH THE PARENTS OF ALL THE CHILDREN AND ASK FOR THEIR HELP. THE QUEEN THOUGHT THAT WAS A WONDERFUL IDEA.

THE SIX SAFETIES THEN WENT TO THE HOUSES OF ALL THE KIDS AND TOLD THE PARENTS THE PROBLEM. THEY ALL DECIDED THAT EVERY DAY EACH OF THE SIX SAFETIES WOULD PLAY WITH ONE OF THE KIDS. THEY WOULD TEACH THE KIDS TO PLAY SAFELY AND SHOW THEM HOW TO PLAY AT THE PLAYGROUND WITHOUT GETTING HURT.

THE NEXT DAY THE SIX KIDS AND THE SIX SAFETIES WENT TO THE PLAYGROUND AND THE SAFETIES MADE SURE THE KIDS PLAYED SAFELY. THEY SHOWED THEM THAT THEY COULD HAVE LOTS AND LOTS OF FUN WITHOUT DOING ANYTHING DANGEROUS.

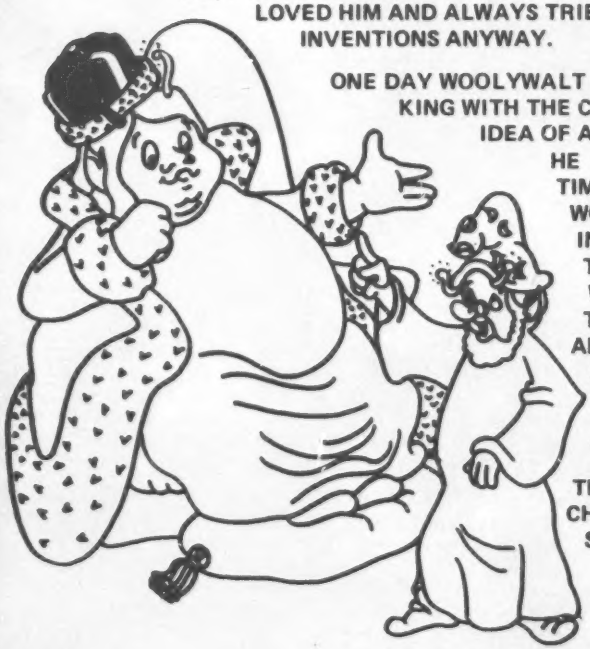
AFTER A WEEK THE KIDS THANKED THE SAFETIES, BECAUSE NODODY HAD EVEN A SKINNED KNEE OR A BUMP ON THE HEAD.

THE SIX SAFETIES WENT BACK TO THE QUEEN AND TOLD HER WHAT HAD HAPPENED. SHE WAS OVERJOYED AND PRAISED THE SIX SAFETIES FOR THEIR GOOD WORK. SHE WANTED TO SEE FOR HERSELF, THOUGH. SO, THE THE NEXT DAY THE QUEEN AND THE SIX SAFETIES WENT TO THE PLAYGROUND. THEY SAW ALL THE KIDS PLAYING SAFELY.

THE KING AND QUEEN OF ARGONIA

MANY YEARS AGO, IN THE REALM OF ARGONIA, THERE LIVED A POWERFUL, BRAVE, AND GOOD KING AND QUEEN. THEY WERE KIND PEOPLE, BUT THEY BOTH HAD ONE WEAKNESS. THEY LOVED INVENTIONS AND EXPERIMENTS. THEIR COURT WIZARD, WOOLYWALT, WAS ALWAYS INVENTING MACHINES TO DO THINGS EVERYONE KNEW WERE IMPOSSIBLE.

ONCE HE MADE A MACHINE HE SAID WOULD MOVE WITHOUT HORSES TO PULL IT. ANOTHER TIME HE SAID HE HAD A MACHINE PEOPLE COULD RIDE IN AND FLY, JUST LIKE BIRDS. CRAZY WOOLYWALT. THEY NEVER WORKED. BUT THE KING AND QUEEN LOVED HIM AND ALWAYS TRIED HIS NEW INVENTIONS ANYWAY.



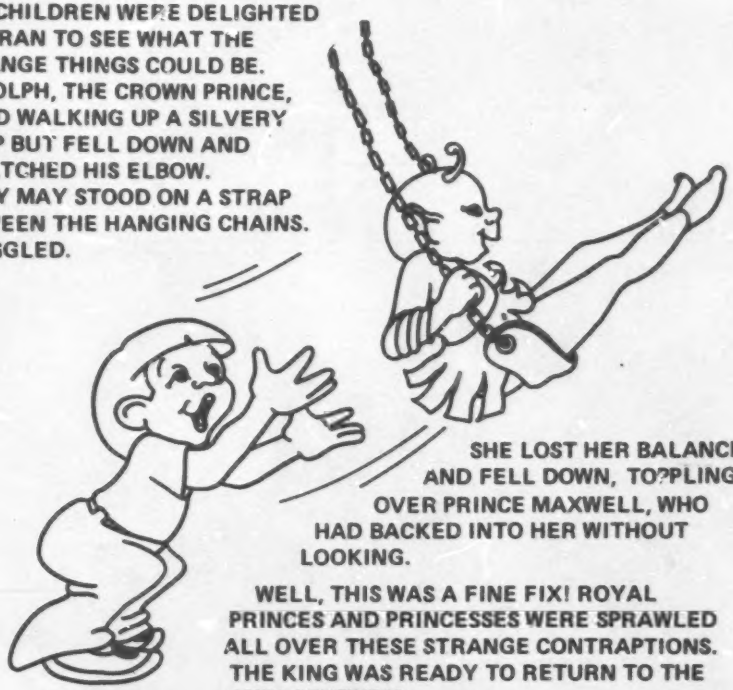
ONE DAY WOOLYWALT CAME TO THE KING WITH THE CRAZIEST IDEA OF ALL.

HE SAID HE HAD A TIME MACHINE THAT WOULD CARRY PEOPLE INTO THE FUTURE. THE KING AND QUEEN WERE SO EXCITED. THEY EVEN FORGOT ABOUT ALL THE OTHER STRANGE IDEAS THAT NEVER WORKED AND TOLD WOOLYWALT THEY WOULD TRY IT.

THEY ASKED HIM TO CHOOSE A CENTURY. SO THE KING AND QUEEN AND THEIR 13 CHILDREN ALL PILED INTO WOOLYWALT'S STRANGE MACHINE. THEY WAITED FOR THE 20TH CENTURY, THE YEAR 1977, TO APPEAR. THEN THEY STOPPED THE MACHINE AND GOT OUT.

A STRANGE RED BRICK BUILDING APPEARED BEFORE THEM. GLEAMING IN THE SUN OUTSIDE WERE SILVERY CONTRAPTIONS, BARS WITH CHAINS AND STRAPS, AND LOTS OF STRANGE BARS AND POLES. IT LOOKED AS THOUGH WOOLYWALT HAD BEEN THERE BEFORE, BUILDING THINGS. BUT HE WAS JUST AS AMAZED AS THE KING AND QUEEN.

THE CHILDREN WERE DELIGHTED AND RAN TO SEE WHAT THE STRANGE THINGS COULD BE. RUDOLPH, THE CROWN PRINCE, TRIED WALKING UP A SILVERY RAMP BUT FELL DOWN AND SCRATCHED HIS ELBOW. DAISY MAY STOOD ON A STRAP BETWEEN THE HANGING CHAINS. IT JIGGLED.



SHE LOST HER BALANCE AND FELL DOWN, TOPPLING OVER PRINCE MAXWELL, WHO HAD BACKED INTO HER WITHOUT LOOKING.

WELL, THIS WAS A FINE FIX! ROYAL PRINCES AND PRINCESSES WERE SPRAWLED ALL OVER THESE STRANGE CONTRAPTIONS. THE KING WAS READY TO RETURN TO THE 13TH CENTURY.

THEN A LOUD RINGING NOISE CAME. CROWDS OF LAUGHING CHILDREN CAME OUT OF THE DOORS AND HEADED FOR THE STRANGE THINGS.

WELL, WEREN'T THEY SURPRISED TO SEE THE KING AND QUEEN OF ARGONIA AND ALL OF THEIR CHILDREN DOING CRAZY THINGS ON THE SWINGS, SLIDES, AND MONKEY BARS BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THEY WERE. THEY HAD ARRIVED AT A PLAYGROUND AT FRANCIS Q. AXELROD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

JOHNNY MATHERS SHOUTED OUT TO PRINCE BARTHOLOMEW, WHO WAS ABOUT TO RUN UP THE SLIDE, "NO, YOU MUSTN'T DO THAT,IT ISN'T SAFE. THAT'S NOT THE WAY TO USE IT."

THE KING AND QUEEN WERE QUICK TO ASK JOHNNY WHAT THESE STRANGE THINGS WERE FOR. JOHNNY EXPLAINED ABOUT SWINGS AND SLIDES AND MONKEY BARS AND HOW THEY WERE FOR CHILDREN TO ENJOY. BUT THEY HAD TO BE USED IN A SAFE WAY OR THE CHILDREN USING THEM COULD GET HURT.

WELL,THE KING AND QUEEN WERE DELIGHTED TO HAVE JOHNNY AND THE OTHER CHILDREN TEACH THEIR CHILDREN HOW TO PLAY SAFELY ON THE PLAYGROUND. JOHNNY SHOWED PRINCE BARTHOLOMEW HOW TO SLIDE DOWN THE SLIDE FEET FIRST, WHILE MIKEY SHOWED DAISY MAY HOW TO SIT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SWING SET. GEORGIA SHOWED CROWN PRINCE RUDOLPH THE LOCK GRIP WHILE SUZY EXPLAINED TO PRINCE MAXWELL ABOUT NEVER WALKING IN FRONT OF THE SWING SETS WHEN THEY WERE IN MOTION.

THE PRINCES AND PRINCESSES WERE HAVING A GRAND TIME AND NONE OF THEM GOT HURT. THEY HAD LEARNED CENTURIES AHEAD OF TIME ABOUT PLAYGROUND SAFETY. THE KING AND QUEEN WERE JUST BEGINNING TO ENJOY THE 20TH CENTURY AND THINK WHAT FINE CHILDREN THE FUTURE HAD WHEN THE STRANGE RINGING NOISE CAME AGAIN AND ALL THE CHILDREN VERY POLITELY SAID GOOD-BY AND WENT BACK INSIDE THE BUILDING.

"HOW VERY ODD," SAID THE QUEEN TO THE KING. "YES, MY DEAR," REPLIED THE KING. "PERHAPS THEIR PARENTS DON'T LIKE THEM PLAYING WITH CHILDREN FROM THE 13TH CENTURY."

JUST THEN PRINCESS ALEXANDRA PULLED HER MOTHER'S GOWN AND SAID, "MOMMY, I'M TIRED, CAN WE GO HOME NOW?" "WELL, YES, MY DEAR. PERHAPS WE CAN COME BACK ANOTHER DAY. REMEMBER NOW ABOUT PLAY SAFETY, SO WHEN WOOLYWALT BUILDS US SOME SWINGS AND SLIDES, WE CAN ALL PLAY ON THEM AND NOT GET HURT."

SO THEY ALL PILED BACK IN WOOLYWALT'S CRAZY MACHINE AND RETURNED TO THE 13TH CENTURY.

SO WHEN YOU PLAY ON THE SWINGS, SLIDES, SEESAWS, AND MONKEY BARS, REMEMBER TO PLAY SAFELY. SOMEONE FROM ANOTHER CENTURY JUST MAY NEED YOUR GOOD EXAMPLE.

THE END.

HEY, SAY-HEY, SAY, THOSE WERE GREAT STORIES. BUT NOW, IF YOU CAN, TELL US – HOW CAN WE LEARN TO PLAY ON EQUIPMENT SAFELY ?

OK, I'LL SHARE MY SPECIAL SAFETY NOTES WITH YOU. THEY WILL TELL YOU WHAT TO DO. THEN YOU CAN REALLY PLAY SAFELY.

SAY HEY'S SAFETY NOTES

Here are ten tips on playground safety and equipment that you can pass on to younger children.

1. Don't roughhouse around playground equipment, don't shove, push or fight.
2. Sit in the center of a swing or else the swing won't swing straight and could bump into another swing.

(Your notes)

3. Do not twist the swing chains or they could break, and never swing empty seats or walk in front of a moving swing, because you or another person could get hurt.

(Your notes)

4. Never walk up the slide from the front.

(Your notes)

5. When you slide always sit straight up with your feet out in front. Do not slide down the sliding board on your stomach or back.

(Your notes)

6. Use the lock-grip when you are on the climbing equipment.

(Your notes)

7. If there are any exposed screws or bolts on swings, they should be capped, or else you could get scratched or poked. If there are no protective caps, then the screws should be taped.

(Your notes)

8. Tell adults not to install swings or any playground equipment on hard surfaces such as concrete, because a child who falls can be more badly injured than if the fall occurs on dirt, or grass.

(Your notes)

9. Help adults check twice a month to be sure that all nuts, bolts, and clamps are tight, to insure that the equipment is not in danger of falling and hurting children.

(Your notes)

10. Talk to younger children and help them to play safely.

(Your notes)

WRITE WHAT YOU THINK SAFETY IS.

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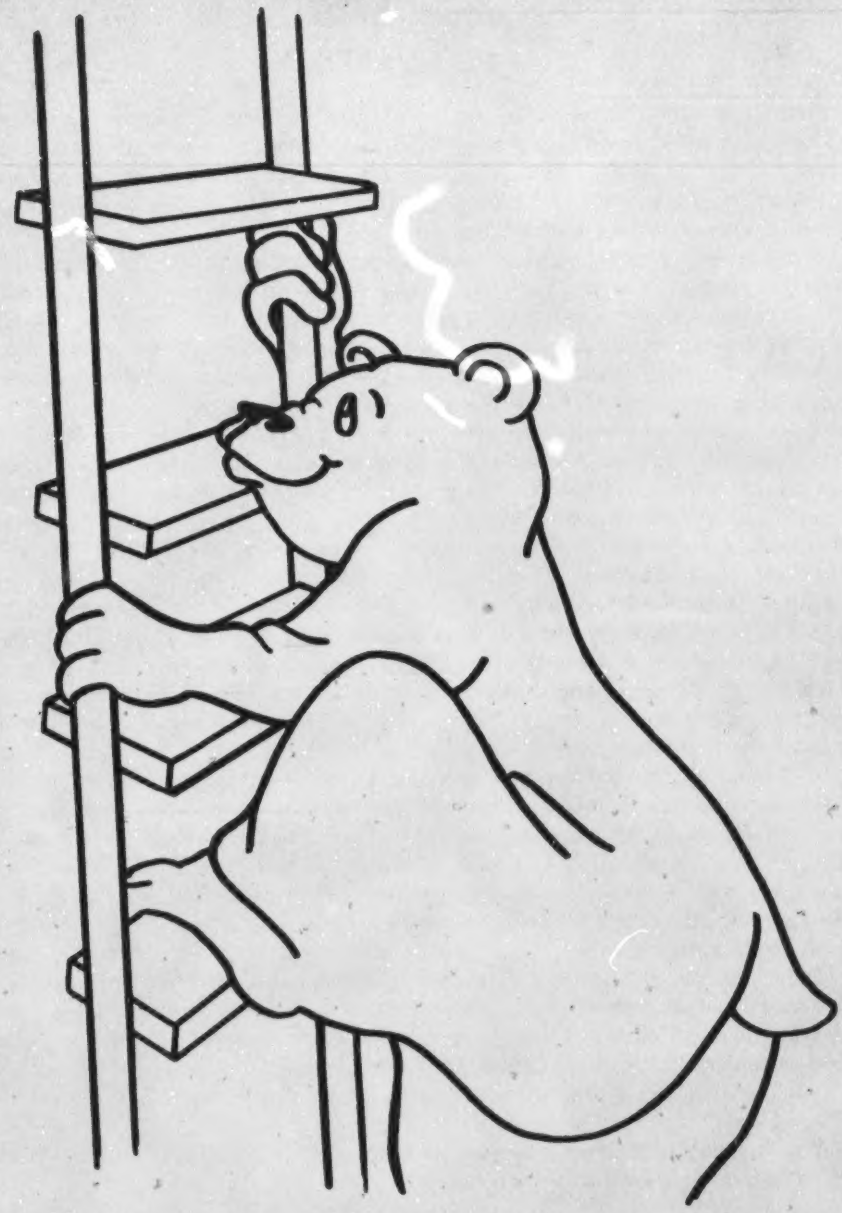

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ADULT'S CORNER

Happy playful children who are very eager to release themselves on the playground often forget what they have been told or never really understood about ways of having fun safely on the playground. These materials are designed to assist children in learning safe play habits on the playground and to continue to reinforce that learning.

To a child, a playground is anywhere—at school, down the block, at a friend's house, or in the backyard. Since adults cannot always be around to assist children to learn playground safety behavior, the importance of selecting the right equipment cannot be overemphasized. It must be installed and maintained correctly and consistently and, more importantly, children must be taught and reminded how to use playground equipment safely.

Play is in the nature of children. It is not merely an "extra" or inconsequential part of a child's life. It is through play that children imitate adults and learn adult habits; through play they learn to be social beings—they learn how to interact with others, to take turns, to share, and to cooperate. Through play, children first learn about life by imagining, creating and designing their own life situations. They learn to think through play; to live out their dreams. They develop muscles and muscle coordination; they learn how healthy physical play is for them—how it helps them to grow and strengthen their bodies.

Play, therefore, is important to children and to all parents and adults. If children are to grow and learn, they must do so safely. Toys and games, bicycles, sports equipment, swimming pools and playground equipment must be designed with safety in mind.

It is natural that children will roughhouse on the playground. This type of behavior, however, sometimes leads to accidents. It is necessary, therefore, to change the child's behavior. In trying to motivate children toward playing safely, the positive approach is preferred. Children should not be frightened into changing their behavior on the playground. The idea of "Play Happy, Play Safely" should be emphasized—for example, "Sit in the swing," or "Hold on with both hands" rather than, "Don't fool around on the monkey bars."

Older children should be taught that it is important for them to play safely because younger brothers and sisters will imitate them. They should be encouraged to take the responsibility of helping younger children play safely on the playground and on equipment that is appropriate for their age group.

You can play an instrumental role in helping children learn to "Play Happy, Play Safely."

You can teach children how to use each type of playground equipment by pointing out the following safe play habits to them:

SWINGS

Tell children to:

—Sit in the center of the swing; never stand or kneel.
—Hold on with both hands.
—Stop the swing before getting off.
—Walk way around the swing—not too close to the front or the back.
—Never push anyone else in the swing or allow others to push them.
—Have one person in one swing at one time.
—Avoid swinging empty swings, and to never twist swing chains.
—Avoid putting head and feet through exercise rings on the swing sets.

SLIDES

Instruct children to:

—Hold on with both hands as they go up the steps of the slide, taking one step at a time; never go up the sliding surface or the frame.
—Keep at least one arm's length between children.
—Slide down feet first, always sitting up, one at a time.
—Be sure no one is in front of the slide before sliding down.
—Be patient, avoid pushing or shoving, and to wait their turn.
—Leave the bottom of the slide after they have taken their turn.
—Never use a metal slide that has been sitting in the sun.

CLIMBING APPARATUS

(geodesic domes or arches and jungle gyms)

Tell children to:

—Use the correct grip; use both hands.
—Be careful of climbing down, and to watch out for those climbing up.
—Avoid having too many people using the apparatus at one time.

(horizontal ladders and bars)

—Start at the same end of the apparatus and move in the same direction.
—Stay well behind the person in front and watch out for swinging feet.
—Never use apparatus when it is wet.
—Avoid speed contests or trying to cover too large a distance in one move.
—Drop from the bars with knees slightly bent and land on both feet.

SEESAWS

Instruct children to:

—Sit facing each other, not leaning back.
—Keep a firm hold with both hands.
—Never stand or run on the board.
—Keep feet out from underneath the board as it descends.

SUMMARY

Children should be encouraged to care about themselves and the health and happiness of playmates on the playground.

They should be told how important it is for them to exercise, to take care of their bodies, to grow strong and healthy (like Mom or Dad or some sports or cartoon hero).

It is important that adults take the time to learn about playground safety for the sake of the children—to be properly motivated to protect all children from unnecessary hurt and risks in their play.

Help the children you come in contact with play happy, and play safely.